



**Australian  
Bureau of  
Statistics**

CATALOGUE NO. 6323.0  
EMBARGOED UNTIL 11.30 A.M. 9 JANUARY 1990

## TRADE UNION STATISTICS, AUSTRALIA 30 JUNE 1989

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- *about these statistics*—contact Fiona Blackshaw on Canberra (062) 52 6561 or any ABS State office.
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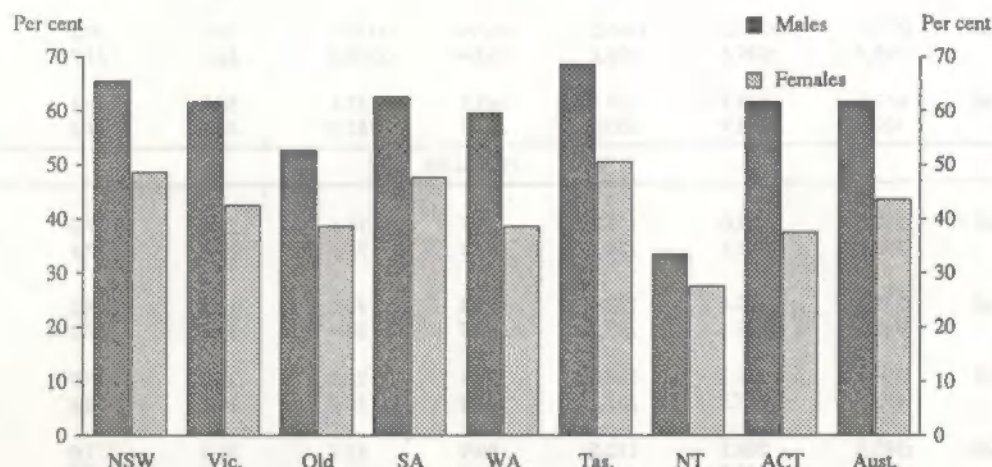
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### MAIN FEATURES

#### TRADE UNION MEMBERS 1989: PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES Source: Table 3



The trade union census of 30 June 1989 identified 299 trade unions, with a combined membership of 3,410,300. Compared to June 1988 figures, this represents a decrease of 9 unions (resulting from the disbanding of two unions and amalgamation of others) and an increase of 119,800 (3.6%) on 1988 membership numbers. The proportion of total employees who were union members at 30 June 1989 (54%) remained the same as in 1988.

South Australia showed the highest proportional increase in membership over 1988 figures, rising by 6.7 per cent to 297,900. Union membership in New South Wales recorded the largest increase in absolute terms, rising by 50,700 members to 1,269,000.

Financial membership (2,988,400) represented 87.6% of total membership.

Female membership increased in all States and Territories between the 1988 and 1989 censuses, accounting for 95,500 (or 79.7 per cent) of the overall membership increase. Approximately 39,000 of the increase in female membership is due to State union members acquiring membership of an affiliated Federal employee association, i.e. dual membership, and therefore being counted twice in these figures (see paragraph 7 of the Explanatory Notes regarding the treatment of employees with multiple union membership).

Of the 299 unions identified at 30 June 1989, 190 had less than 3,000 members, accounting for only 3.9 per cent of total union membership. The eleven largest unions, which each reported membership of 80,000 or more, accounted for 41.3 per cent of total union membership.

### NOTES

The trade union statistics are compiled from questionnaires completed by individual trade unions. Accordingly, persons who are members of more than one trade union are counted more than once.

The statistics relate to trade union membership as reported by the unions, and may include persons who do not consider themselves as members (eg. unfinancial, honorary, suspended) and state of operation.

Explanatory notes are published on pages 5 and 6 of this publication.

IAN CASTLES  
Australian Statistician

TABLE 1. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.(a)
30 June									
1985	183	177	138	143	146	130	76	83	323
1986	182	176	141	144	147	135	78	87	326
1987	178	166	137	137	140	130	75	78	316
1988	170	166	130	136	139	120	73	74	308
1989	169	160	129	135	134	125	71	73	299

(a) Australian totals do not equal the sum of the States and Territories. See paragraph 3 of the Explanatory Notes.

TABLE 2. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS (' 000)

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
MALES									
30 June									
1985—Financial	660.0	488.3	283.3	161.0	148.9	57.5	11.1	37.2	1,847.4
Total	756.2	568.0	328.8	183.2	166.3	64.1	13.9	41.2	2,121.6
1986—Financial	664.4	527.4	270.6	162.1	152.4	60.9	11.4	42.9	1,892.1
Total	757.0	586.9	309.7	178.7	167.8	65.2	13.9	47.2	2,126.5
1987—Financial	673.6	515.8	260.5	166.2	152.1	61.9	11.6	38.7	1,880.5
Total	772.2	578.4	305.2	184.3	170.8	67.1	13.6	44.4	2,136.0
1988—Financial	r675.1	r520.2	r266.2	r165.4	r155.1	56.7	10.1	r35.9	r1,884.6
Total	r795.3	r589.6	r303.1	r183.9	r178.5	62.5	11.7	r42.2	r2,166.6
1989—Financial	652.8	523.3	255.1	165.5	157.4	56.3	9.4	31.4	1,851.2
Total	807.6	598.9	300.0	187.3	181.9	63.0	11.6	40.6	2,191.0
FEMALES									
30 June									
1985—Financial	357.0	269.0	113.7	85.7	74.4	29.4	7.0	19.2	955.4
Total	392.7	290.5	124.1	89.9	78.2	29.8	7.4	20.0	1,032.6
1986—Financial	357.0	277.6	123.6	85.8	80.8	28.8	6.2	18.7	978.4
Total	391.3	299.5	137.7	89.7	84.4	29.2	7.3	20.5	1,059.7
1987—Financial	400.4	279.1	139.0	82.1	76.3	28.9	5.9	16.9	1,028.7
Total	433.5	297.3	151.1	86.6	80.9	29.4	6.6	18.8	1,104.2
1988—Financial	r383.9	289.3	132.5	90.9	83.7	31.3	7.0	19.2	r1,037.6
Total	r423.1	r311.9	r144.1	r95.3	r89.6	31.6	7.6	20.8	r1,123.8
1989—Financial	430.9	310.2	145.2	103.4	86.9	32.1	7.1	21.6	1,137.2
Total	461.5	332.3	158.0	110.6	92.5	34.0	7.7	22.7	1,219.3
PERSONS									
30 June									
1985—Financial	1,016.9	757.4	397.1	246.8	223.3	86.9	18.1	56.3	2,802.8
Total	1,148.9	858.5	452.9	273.1	244.5	93.9	21.3	61.2	3,154.2
1986—Financial	1,021.4	805.0	394.1	247.9	233.2	89.7	17.5	61.6	2,870.5
Total	1,148.2	886.4	447.5	268.5	252.2	94.4	21.2	67.7	3,186.2
1987—Financial	1,074.0	794.9	399.6	248.4	228.3	90.8	17.5	55.6	2,909.2
Total	1,205.8	875.7	456.3	270.9	251.7	96.5	20.2	63.1	3,240.1
1988—Financial	r1,059.0	r809.5	r398.7	r256.3	r238.8	88.0	17.0	r55.1	r2,922.3
Total	r1,218.3	r901.5	r447.1	r279.2	r268.0	94.1	19.3	r63.0	r3,290.5
1989—Financial	1,083.6	833.5	400.3	268.8	244.3	88.4	16.4	53.0	2,988.4
Total	1,269.0	931.2	458.0	297.9	274.4	97.1	19.3	63.4	3,410.3



TABLE 3. TRADE UNION MEMBERS : PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES  
(per cent)

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
MALES									
30 June									
1985—Financial	58	56	56	57	51	65	35	61	57
Total	67	65	65	65	57	72	44	67	65
1986—Financial	58	57	53	57	50	66	33	66	56
Total	66	63	61	63	55	71	40	73	63
1987—Financial	58	56	52	60	49	67	31	60	55
Total	66	63	61	66	55	73	36	69	63
1988—Financial	54	55	52	57	50	63	32	55	54
Total	r64	r63	r59	63	r57	69	38	r64	r62
1989—Financial	53	54	45	56	52	62	27	49	52
Total	66	62	53	63	60	69	34	63	62
FEMALES									
30 June									
1985—Financial	46	44	36	44	37	50	31	36	43
Total	51	47	39	46	39	51	33	38	46
1986—Financial	44	41	37	43	37	46	22	35	41
Total	48	44	41	45	39	47	26	38	44
1987—Financial	47	39	40	39	33	43	24	29	41
Total	51	42	44	41	35	44	27	32	44
1988—Financial	42	39	37	42	36	47	28	31	40
Total	46	r43	40	r45	38	47	30	34	43
1989—Financial	46	40	35	45	36	48	26	36	41
Total	49	43	39	48	39	51	28	38	44
PERSONS									
30 June									
1985—Financial	53	50	48	52	45	59	33	50	51
Total	60	57	55	57	49	64	39	54	57
1986—Financial	52	50	47	51	44	58	28	52	50
Total	58	55	53	55	48	61	34	57	55
1987—Financial	53	49	47	50	42	57	29	45	49
Total	59	54	54	55	46	61	33	51	55
1988—Financial	49	48	46	51	44	56	30	43	48
Total	r57	r54	r51	55	r49	60	34	r50	r54
1989—Financial	50	48	41	51	45	56	27	43	47
Total	58	54	47	57	50	62	31	51	54

TABLE 4. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF STATES AND/OR TERRITORIES OF OPERATION, AUSTRALIA

	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six or more	Two or more	Total all States
NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS								
30 June								
1985	183	8	3	12	15	102	140	323
1986	187	6	3	13	14	103	139	326
1987	180	9	5	12	13	97	136	316
1988	177	6	4	12	16	93	131	308
1989	168	6	6	10	15	94	131	299
NUMBER OF MEMBERS								
30 June								
1985	541.7	20.9	52.7	142.4	208.7	2,187.7	2,612.5	3,154.2
1986	540.3	20.1	54.4	94.0	179.5	2,297.8	2,645.8	3,186.2
1987	586.4	23.4	62.2	93.4	185.4	2,289.5	2,653.9	3,240.1
1988	r575.3	18.3	54.8	r109.3	218.6	r2,314.1	r2,715.2	r3,290.5
1989	531.4	18.9	55.9	111.7	186.6	2,505.7	2,878.9	3,410.3

TABLE 5. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF UNIONS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF UNION, AUSTRALIA

Size of Union (number of members)	Number of unions				30 June 1989		
	30 June 1985	30 June 1986	30 June 1987	30 June 1988	Number of unions	Per cent total unions	Cumulative per cent of total unions
Under 100	35	40	40	37	38	12.7	12.7
100 and under 250	42	40	39	32	31	10.4	23.1
250 and under 500	30	32	25	31	26	8.7	31.8
500 and under 1,000	47	43	45	43	41	13.7	45.5
1,000 and under 2,000	41	45	44	45	42	14.0	59.5
2,000 and under 3,000	} 41	39	13	11	12	4.0	63.5
3,000 and under 5,000			25	27	25	8.4	71.9
5,000 and under 10,000	22	23	21	18	19	6.4	78.3
10,000 and under 20,000	21	19	17	19	19	6.4	84.6
20,000 and under 30,000	10	12	14	11	12	4.0	88.6
30,000 and under 40,000	7	7	6	8	10	3.3	92.0
40,000 and under 50,000	10	10	8	8	6	2.0	94.0
50,000 and under 80,000	7	8	10	18	7	2.3	96.3
80,000 and over	10	8	9	110	11	3.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

TABLE 6. TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER OF MEMBERS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF UNIONS, AUSTRALIA(a)

Size of Union (number of members)	Number of members ('000)					30 June 1989		
	30 June 1985	30 June 1986	30 June 1987	30 June 1988	30 June 1989	Average number of members per union	Percent of total members	Cumulative per cent of total members
Under 100	1.7	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.7	45	0.1	0.1
100 and under 250	6.7	6.6	6.6	5.3	5.3	170	0.2	0.2
250 and under 500	10.7	11.8	9.1	11.4	8.9	341	0.3	0.5
500 and under 1,000	33.9	31.1	32.0	30.6	28.8	703	0.8	1.3
1,000 and under 2,000	56.1	63.0	60.0	65.2	59.5	1,417	1.7	3.1
2,000 and under 3,000	} 128.9	130.1	31.7	27.8	29.6	2,466	0.9	3.9
3,000 and under 5,000			101.9	107.1	98.8	3,950	2.9	6.8
5,000 and under 10,000	149.4	158.8	149.9	131.6	138.9	7,309	4.1	10.9
10,000 and under 20,000	301.3	275.0	234.4	268.5	261.3	13,755	7.7	18.6
20,000 and under 30,000	234.8	294.6	338.0	261.1	295.4	24,620	8.7	27.2
30,000 and under 40,000	242.1	251.3	203.3	277.1	350.2	35,017	10.3	37.5
40,000 and under 50,000	452.3	455.8	366.5	353.9	271.1	45,177	7.9	45.4
50,000 and under 80,000	408.6	529.4	618.9	1,499.9	453.1	64,723	13.3	58.7
80,000 and over	1,127.7	976.8	1,085.9	1,249.3	1,407.8	127,983	41.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,154.2</b>	<b>3,186.2</b>	<b>3,240.1</b>	<b>1,249.3</b>	<b>3,410.3</b>	<b>11,406</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### Introduction

The statistics in this publication have been compiled from questionnaires completed by individual trade unions in respect of their membership and State of operation as at 30 June 1989. The collection was changed to an end of June basis in 1985. Figures for previous years were collected as at 31 December.

### Scope and coverage

2. Current lists of trade unions are maintained by reference to the following sources:

- trade unions registered under the provisions of the various Federal and State industrial arbitration Acts, trade union Acts, etc.
- unions reported to be engaged in conciliation and arbitration proceedings
- reports in trade journals, trade union and employer periodicals, newspapers and other publications.

It should be noted that not all reporting trade unions are registered under industrial arbitration legislation or State trade union Acts.

3. To reduce the possibility of duplication of the number of unions and members in these statistics, where a trade union is a branch of a larger trade union, only the larger organisation is counted. An interstate or federated trade union (i.e. a union with members in more than one State or Territory) is treated as a separate union in each State or Territory in which it has members, but is counted only once in the Australian total. Unions with interstate associations which are not strictly branches of a common organisation are counted as separate unions in the totals for Australia.

4. The published number of trade unions varies from year to year as a result of amalgamations of unions, deregistration of unions, unions ceasing to operate, new unions being formed, existing organisations changing their status such that it brings them within the scope of the definition of a trade union (see paragraph 5), and existing unions reporting for the first time.

### Definitions

5. For the purpose of these statistics a *trade union* is defined as an organisation, consisting predominantly of employees, the principal activities of which include the negotiation of rates of pay and conditions of employment for its members. Non-operating unions or branches, i.e. those with no members at the date of collection, are not included in the statistics.

6. *Membership of trade unions.* Financial members are dues paying members no more than 6 months in arrears.

*The total number of members* includes all persons (financial, unfinancial, honorary, suspended, junior, etc.) regarded by unions as members.

7. Persons who are members of more than one union cannot be separately identified and are therefore counted more than once in the totals. The extent of this duplication is not known. Membership figures may be affected by differences in the concept of membership adopted by different unions or by the same union at different times (see paragraph 9 below).

8. *Proportion of total employees.* The approximate percentages of wage and salary earners in employment (i.e. employees) who were members of trade unions are shown in Table 3. From 30 June 1985, the proportions of employees have been calculated using estimates of employees from the ABS Survey of Employment and Earnings. These estimates have been adjusted by adding Labour Force Survey estimates of employees in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and in private households employing staff. For statistics for periods prior to 30 June 1985, estimates of employees were taken from the *Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0). The percentages shown should be regarded as giving only a broad indication of the extent of union membership among employees, because they are based on estimates of employed wage and salary earners; the numbers of union members who were not employed (i.e. were unemployed, retired, etc.) will affect the percentages for a particular year and comparisons over time.

### Comparability of series

9. Comparability of figures for different years may be affected by a number of factors. As stated in paragraph 7, there may be duplication in the count of members. This duplication may vary over time. Union rules on membership may follow different concepts and practices and this may be reflected in the level and fluctuations of the figures reported. Unions reported financial and total membership separately for the first time as at 30 June 1985. In previous years some unions confined their reported membership to 'financial' members whilst others included various other members. Individual unions may or may not include in their reported membership unemployed members, members who have retired from the labour force, disabled members, members with dues in arrears (who may be kept on union books for varying lengths of time), etc.

10. Membership of trade unions is shown separately for males and females for each State and Territory. The subdivision of total membership into males and females is not precise because some trade unions are unable to state the exact number of male and female members. The subdivision of total membership by States and Territories is also not precise because some unions in the Territories are affiliated with State organisations and their membership is reported under the heading of that State.



### Organisations registered under industrial arbitration legislation

11. Details of employee organisations registered under the *Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904* as at 30 June 1989, and comparisons for 1988, are as follows:

	1989	1988
Employee unions	140	146
Membership	2,846,400	2,733,100

1989 membership figures reflect 83% of total reported trade union membership.

12. Industrial legislation in most States also provides for the registration of employee associations. Some employee associations are registered under more than one Act but these are counted only once in these statistics.

### Comparison with other trade union statistics

13. Statistics on trade union membership are also collected periodically by the ABS from a sample survey of employees, published in *Trade Union Members, Australia* (6325.0). Statistics from that survey are not directly comparable with trade union census data due to differences in timing and methodology. There are also significant differences in coverage, which are detailed in the explanatory notes to their publication.

### Related publications

14. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

*Industrial Disputes, Australia* (6322.0) — issued annually

*Industrial Disputes, Australia* (6321.0) — issued monthly

*Labour Statistics, Australia, 1987* (6101.0)

*The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary* (6202.0) — issued monthly

*The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0) — issued monthly

*Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia* (6248.0) — issued quarterly

*Trade Union Members, Australia, August 1988* (6325.0)

*Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia* (6312.0) — issued monthly

### Unpublished statistics

15. In some cases, the ABS can also make available information which is not published. This information may be made available in one or more of the following forms: microfiche, photocopy, data tape, computer printout, clerically-extracted tabulation. Generally, a charge is made for providing unpublished information. Inquiries should be made to the officer whose name appears in the *Phone Inquiries* section of the inquiries box at the front of this publication, or to Information Services in the nearest ABS office.

16. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

### Symbols and other usages

r Estimates revised since last issue

17. Where estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

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